



“Open Church – Open Bible”

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Sunday Church School --

May 9, 2021

“Elected By God”— Romans 9:6-21

Golden Text: Romans 9:18

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Romans 9:6-21

⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel,

⁷ nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "*In Isaac your seed shall be called.*"

⁸ That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

⁹ For this *is* the word of promise: "*At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.*"

¹⁰ And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac

¹¹ (for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),

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Romans 9:6-21

¹² it was said to her, *"The older shall serve the younger."*

¹³ As it is written, *"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*

¹⁴ What shall we say then? *Is there unrighteousness with God?*
Certainly not!

¹⁵ For He says to Moses, *"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."*

¹⁶ So then *it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, *"For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."*

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¹⁸Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

¹⁹You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

²⁰But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, "Why have you made me like this?"

²¹Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

TODAY'S AIM

Facts: to study Paul's description of divine sovereignty in election.

Principle: to understand that God sovereignly chose us to be saved.

Application: to live in the daily awareness that God is sovereign over all that takes place.

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The Bible presents us with various paradoxes and divine mysteries. A paradox is a combination of two **things** that **seem contradictory**.

Several well-known paradoxes are central to the Christian faith:

- A. We must lose our lives in order to gain them.
- B. We must give generously to receive much.
- C. God’s strength is revealed through our weakness.
- D. If we humble ourselves, we will be exalted. If we exalt ourselves, we will be humbled.

A **divine paradox** is when two seemingly opposing truths are both fully affirmed by biblical doctrine.

Some divine paradoxes are essential to the Christian faith.

- We believe that Jesus Christ became fully man while retaining His full deity.
- The idea that God became a man is the mystery of the incarnation.
- By definition, God is infinite and man is finite ► Jesus is God ► Jesus became a man.
 - We affirm both statements as true despite the tension in the divine mystery.

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- Another divine paradox concerns God’s sovereignty and human choice.
- God’s sovereignty means that all events happen just as He plans.
- The Bible is full of events that turned out exactly as God promised.
- However, many of these events included the choices and actions of humans.
- God sovereignly declared in advance what would happen.

LESSON OUTLINE:

I. GOD’S PEOPLE —Rom. 9:6-13

II. GOD’S MERCY —Rom. 9:14-18

III. GOD’S WILL —Rom. 9:19-21

I. GOD’S PEOPLE —Rom. 9:6-13

In spite of being tiny by comparison to both modern nations and ancient empires, Israel is at the center of God’s plan for the salvation of the world.

Calling Abraham to leave the place of his birth in Mesopotamia, the Lord promised that his descendants (whether physical or spiritual) would be extremely numerous

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Paul was aware that he was regarded as a traitor to the interests of his people (Acts 21:33; 22:22; 25:24), so he opens this division of Romans by giving vent to his real feelings with extraordinary vehemence of protest

- **V 1** *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not*—as if steeped in the spirit of Jesus as He wept over impenitent and doomed Jerusalem (**Rom 1:9; II Cor. 12:19; Php 1:8**).
- **V 1** *my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost*— his conscience illuminated and directed by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost.
- **V 3** *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for*—“in behalf of” my kinsmen (brethren) according to the flesh
 - His passion was in direct proportion as he felt severed from his nation

Paul would expend three chapters dealing with Israel’s spiritual history: **past** (chap. 9), **present** (chap. 10), and **future** (chap. 11).

- His purpose is to explain how God could set aside His chosen people and save the Gentiles, and how He will restore the nation at some future date.

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Tantamount to this assertion is the truth that Israel was Not Saved by Ethnic Descent

Most Jewish people believed that their people as a whole was saved, in contrast to the Gentiles.

- Paul argues here that ethnicity is insufficient grounds for salvation, as the OT also taught (Num. 14:22-23; Deut. 1:34-35; Psl. 78:21-22; 95:8-11; 106:26-27)
 - God can save on whatever terms he wishes.
 - Abraham had two sons while Sarah was alive, but only one received the promise (Gen. 17:18-21).
 - Isaac had two sons, but only one received the promise; and this was determined before their birth (Gen. 25:23; Mal. 1:2-3).
- ☐ Although God chose Jacob despite foreknowing Jacob’s heart (Rom. 8:29), the point here is that God has the right to choose among the chosen line.

Although Israel was the chosen people of God, most of the Jews had rejected the gospel; and in the previous section, Paul lamented this rejection.

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- Not all Abraham’s descendants received the promise; the rest of the OT was clear that many Israelites broke the covenant (Exd. 32:33-35; Num. 11:1; 14:37; 16:32-35; 25:4-5; Deut. 1:35).

We admire Paul’s burden for Israel and his words remind us of Moses in Exd. 32:31–32 – expressing to lost souls the blessings of election (Rom 9:1-5)

- (1) **The adoption**—chosen by God because of His love (Isa. 43:20–21)
- (2) **The glory**—the presence of God in the tabernacle (Exd. 24:16–17)
- (3) **The unchanging covenants**—through Abraham, Moses and David
- (4) **The giving of the Law**—Israel heard God’s voice and received His laws to govern their lives.
- (5) **The service of God**—the priestly service in the tabernacle was a privilege
- (6) **The promises**—many OT promises have been fulfilled; others still remaining
- (7) **The fathers**—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve sons of Jacob formed the foundation for the nation.
- (8) **The Messiah**—Christ was a Jew, of the tribe of Judah, born according to the Law.

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No other nation had these wonderful blessings; yet Israel took them for granted and ultimately rejected the righteousness of God.

- In election, God exercises His sovereign will to accomplish His perfect plan.

Christians today are also God’s elect and has similar blessings to enjoy:

- **adoption** (Eph. 1:5) • **glory** (Eph. 1:6–7) • the **new covenant** in Christ’s blood (Heb. 9–10) • the **law** written on the heart (II Cor. 3; Heb. 10:16–17)
- **priestly service** through Christ (I Peter 2:5) • and we have **Abraham** as the father of the believing (Gal. 3:7)—all because we have Christ.

Keep in mind that the election discussed in Rom. 9–11 is **national** and not **individual** and to apply all the truths of these chapters to the **salvation or security** of the individual believer is to miss their message completely.

In fact, Paul carefully points out that he is discussing the Jews and Gentiles as **peoples, not individual sinners.**

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- (1) Abraham** was chosen as the father of the Hebrew nation, but Paul states that not all Israelites are true sons of Israel. (Rom. 2:25–29.)
- Abraham had many children (Gen. 25:1–6), but only **one chosen son**, Isaac, who was the child of promise by faith.
- (2) Isaac**—He was the child of promise by faith (Gal. 4:21–31), while Ishmael was a child of the flesh through works.
- The true “**seed of Abraham**” are the **believers**, and not just all who have Jewish blood in their veins.
- (3) Jacob**—God bypassed Esau, the firstborn, and chose Jacob, and this choice was made even before the children were born.
- Why? To show that God’s purpose in electing His nation would be fulfilled.
 - Esau made the choice to rebel against God, but God’s purpose does not depend on man’s decisions.
 - We cannot explain the relationship between man’s choice and God’s purpose, but we know that both are true and are taught in the Word.

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II. GOD’S MERCY —Rom. 9:14-18

- The doctrine of Israel’s national election raises crucial theological questions:

A. Is God unrighteous? (V 14–18)

- Of course not! For election has nothing to do with justice, but rather free grace. “God is unjust if He chooses one and leaves another!”
- But the purpose of God goes beyond justice; for if God did only what was just, He would have to condemn all of us!
- Paul uses Moses (Ex. 33:19) and Pharaoh (Ex. 9:16) as proof that God can do what He wishes in dispensing His grace and mercy.
- Nobody deserves God’s mercy, and nobody can condemn God for His choice of Israel or His bypassing of other nations.

B. Why does God find fault if none can resist His will? (V 19–29)

- Paul replies with a parable about a potter, borrowed from Jer. 18:1–6.
- God is the Potter, and the nations of the world (and their leaders) are the vessels.

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- Some are vessels of wrath that God patiently endures until their time of destruction (Gen. 15:16).
- Others are vessels of mercy that reveal His glory.
- Paul then quotes Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 to show that God promised to call a “people” from among the Gentiles, a people to be called “children of the living God.” This is the church (1 Peter 2:9–10).
- He also quotes Isa. 10:22–23, showing that a remnant of Jews would also be saved (Isa. 1:9).
- In other words, God’s purpose in election makes it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to be saved by grace.
- Neither Jew nor Gentile could be saved any way other than by the grace of God.

III. GOD’S WILL —Rom. 9:19-21

- Paul anticipates that some will consider it unfair for God to judge those whom He has made stubborn.

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- Again, he does not attempt to defend God; rather he reasserts God’s sovereign rights as Creator.
- Humans are not in a position to question God (Job 38:1-4).
- They can only admit that His wisdom is perfect and beyond human comprehension (Rom. 11:33-36).

This objection to the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty found in V 19 is incompatible with human responsibility:

- If God chooses and rejects, pardons and punishes, whom He pleases, why are those blamed who, if rejected by Him, cannot help sinning and perishing?
- This objection shows quite conclusively the real nature of the doctrine objected to—that it is Election and Non-election to eternal salvation prior to any difference of personal character
- What now is the apostle’s answer? It is twofold:
 - 1) First: “It is irreverence and presumption in the creature to arraign the Creator.”

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- ❑ **V 20** Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made—“didst thou make” me thus? (Isa 45:9).
- ❑ **V 21** Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor?
- ❑ The objection is founded on the misapprehension of the relation between God and His sinful creatures; supposing that He is under obligation to extend His grace to all, whereas He is under obligation to none.
- ❑ All are sinners, and have forfeited every claim to His mercy; it is therefore perfectly competent to God to spare one and not another, to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor.
- ❑ But it is to be borne in mind that Paul does not here speak of God’s right over His creatures as creatures, but as **sinful creatures**.
- ❑ There is nothing unjust in such sovereignty.

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DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- I. Who are classified as God’s Children? Is there a distinction to those called the children of promise? If one is born into a Christian family, does that automatically make that person a Christian? Why? Why not?

- II. Is there any injustice in the choices God makes?(Rom. 9:14-19). Verse 14 addresses the real issue for Paul’s readers: “Is there unrighteousness with God?” Was God unjust in choosing Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over his brother Esau?

- III. Ultimately, human beings cannot charge God with injustice. God is the Potter, and we are the clay. He does not accommodate those who demand His blessings but refuse to repent and submit to Him. Is God justified in this matter?

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“ADVANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE”

1. What advantage had God’s plan given the Jews?
2. What did Paul mean when he said that not all who are descended from Israel are Israel?
3. How was Abraham’s family an illustration of Romans 9:6?
4. In what way were Sarah and Rebekah alike?
5. When did God decide the futures of Jacob and Esau?
6. What is Paul’s conclusion for those who deny God’s righteousness? What was revealed in God’s dealings with Pharaoh?
7. Why should we pray if God sovereignly decrees everything?

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